

Overview of the Consolidated Planning Focus Group

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) California State Office convened a focus group with 16 grantees, to discuss the Consolidated Plan. Grantees participating represented large and small cities, urban counties, HOME consortia, and the State of California. A list of participants is included with this report.

The purpose of the Focus Group was to obtain input from grantees on ways to improve and streamline the Consolidated Plan. The Focus Group was held on Tuesday, February 19, 2002 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the HUD office in San Francisco. Steve Sachs, Director of Community Planning and Development, began the Focus Group by explaining the purpose and objectives of the Focus Group. The objectives were the following:

- Identifying Consolidated Planning (Con Plan) strengths and weaknesses;
- Providing recommendations to streamline the Con Plan;
- Improving linkages between the Con Plan, Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER);
- Coordinating the Con Plan with other plans (e.g. local Housing Plan, Continuum of Care, Public Housing Plan, etc.);
- Determining useful components of the Con Plan: relating to broader planning efforts; interagency coordination, welfare-to-work initiatives, regional development, citizen participation, etc.;
- Changing the Con Plan to be more “results-oriented”: measurable goals/objectives, benchmarking, tracking and reporting performance/outcomes; and
- Reporting on other issues identified by the group.

The Focus Group was divided into two sessions. The first session was a free-flowing discussion to allow each participant to comment and make recommendations on the Consolidated Planning process. A summary of the Session One Focus Group discussion is included with this report.

The second session divided participants into four smaller working groups to discuss four key discussion topics derived from the first session. These four smaller working groups discussed the following topics: (1) What is the Purpose and who is the Audience of the Con Plan?; (2) How can the Con Plan be Linked with other Plans?; (3) What are the key Con Plan Data Elements? (4) How should grantees’ report Goals and Accomplishments? The smaller working groups discussed these topics in more depth and reported recommendations to the larger group. A summary of the Session Two Focus Group Smaller Break-out Groups is included with this report.